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Primary Years Programme

Making the PYP happen

Pedagogical leadership in a PYP school



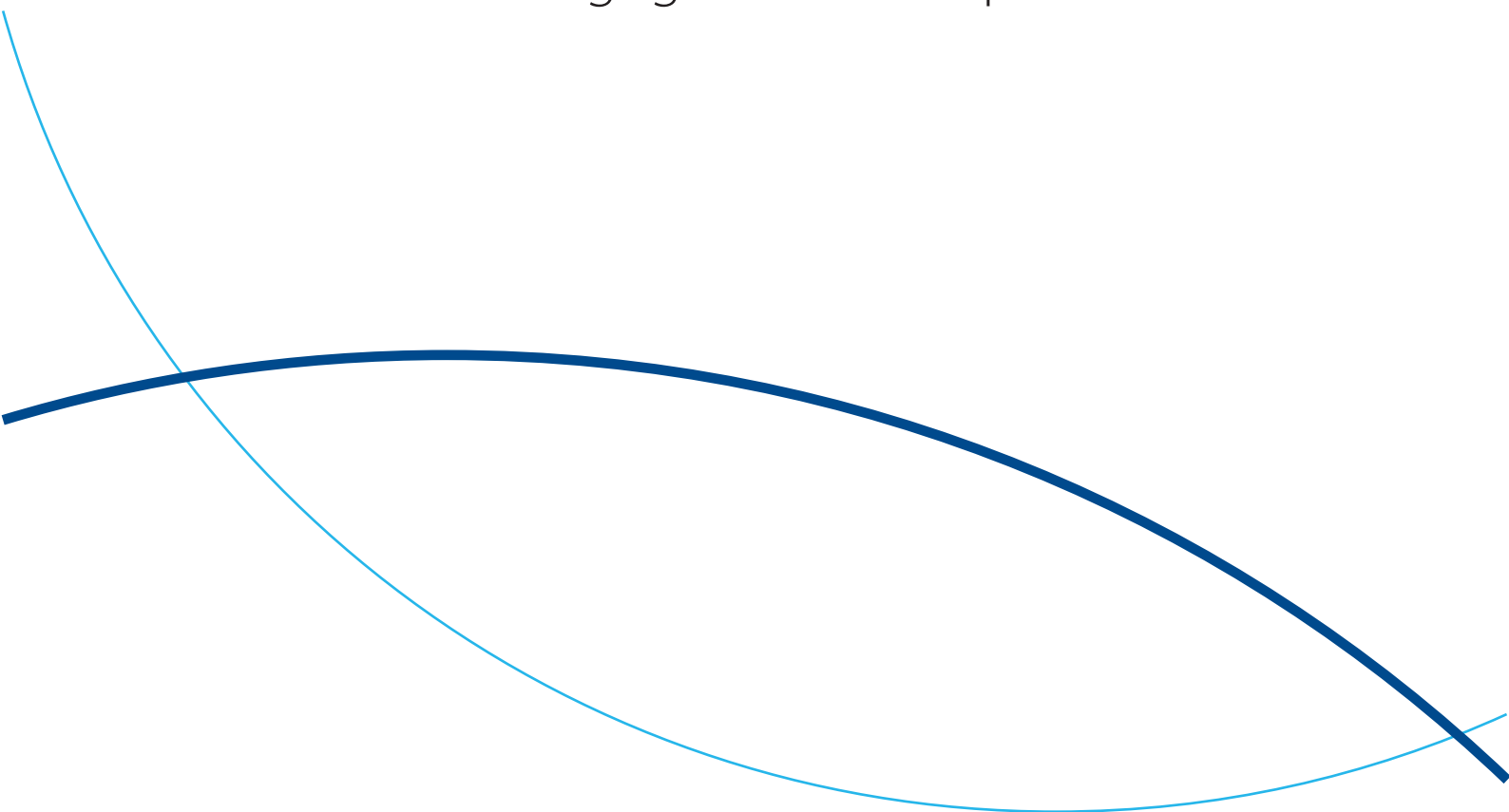


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Making the PYP happen: Pedagogical leadership in a PYP school

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Introduction

This document needs to be read in conjunction with *Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education* (2009).

The Primary Years Programme (PYP) represents a combination of wide-ranging research and experience—excellent practice derived from a variety of national system and independent schools, and from IB World Schools offering a coherent programme of international education. *Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education* (2009) is, in part, a response to practical questions regarding implementation of the programme raised by school leaders who are often obliged to respond to pressures from many, sometimes conflicting, sources. It is likely that they might appreciate some support themselves, in the form of the best advice that the International Baccalaureate (IB) can offer—a concise, accessible overview of key issues linked to practical ideas for action.

In the PYP, it is recognized that improvements, and therefore changes, in the classroom only happen in the context of overall school improvement. Given the vital role of the school's leadership in this process, it is clear that the implementation of the PYP curriculum framework will depend to a large extent on the support and, more importantly, the understanding and practical involvement of the school's leadership. This document, entitled *Making the PYP happen: Pedagogical leadership in a PYP school* (2009), offers further support for PYP principals and coordinators.

The IB trusts that these publications will serve their purpose and prove to be useful resources as we work together to improve the quality of learning for students, teachers, parents and administrators in the international community of learners.

Definition of pedagogical leadership

Pedagogical leadership is about the effective management of resources—people, time and money—to ensure the enhancement of the teaching and learning in order to address the overarching mission of the school.

What are the beliefs and values that drive pedagogical leadership in the PYP?

Implementation of the PYP will invariably change and improve teaching and learning in schools. The investment in supporting this increase in professionalism, from both teachers and school leaders, is significant in terms of time, commitment and emotional energy. The continuing success of the programme depends on creating a community of learners, where there is evidence of:

- a common understanding of the principles and practices of the programme on the part of all stakeholders, and a personal commitment on everyone's part to support them fully
- a commitment to the development of the IB learner profile (see figure 1) on behalf of each and every one of the learners—students, teachers and school leaders
- effective leadership that sustains the implementation and ongoing development of the programme in the long term, often through periods of substantial staff turnover.

What constitutes effective leadership?

In any organization, the fundamental function of leadership is to define and clarify the “primary task”, and to support the efforts of others towards addressing that task. The “primary task” in a school setting is to enhance the learning of all students. In an IB World School, the “primary task” is encapsulated in the mission statement of the school that needs, in turn, to be aligned with the mission statement of the IB. Effective school leaders must therefore see themselves, first and foremost, as pedagogical leaders.

The mission statement of the International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

It may be the case that the vision and drive of one individual, the charismatic leader, may bring about more immediate innovation, having a marked impact on the functioning of the entire school community. However, models of team leadership have overriding benefits in comparison with the charismatic leadership model, particularly for schools that have a transient population of both teachers and school leaders.

Sustainable leadership

It is often the case that heads of school or principals move more frequently from school to school than do the teachers. In these situations, sustainable pedagogical leadership is the goal, most likely to be achieved when leadership is devolved throughout a leadership team.

Hargreaves (Hargreaves and Fink 2005) claims that sustainable leadership is supported best by long-term succession planning involving a “distributed leadership” model, whereby “deeper and wider pools of leadership talent” are developed within the school. Given the premise that PYP schools are communities of learners, the school leaders should be mindful of ways to motivate, challenge and empower teachers to accept and enjoy leadership roles, and to support them on that path. Assessment as feedback, to improve learning and performance, is as relevant for teachers taking on new responsibilities as it is for the students in their classrooms.

Stresses and strains are often evident when there is a change in school leadership, specifically because the institutional memory is held by the teachers that are already in place. Consequently, it is essential, in a candidate school (one preparing to become an IB World School) and in an IB World School, that the incoming school leader understands and accepts the “primary task” of the school community. To support that school community fully, the principal, as one of the pedagogical leaders, must be as fully informed about the PYP as are the teachers and the PYP coordinator. If the incoming principal does not have the previous experience of being a principal in a PYP school, induction should include opportunities not only for finding out about the school community but also about its programme.

Collaboration within the leadership team

The constructivist approach that the PYP advocates for student learning applies equally well to the learning of teachers and administrators in a PYP school.

This document defines the school administrator as having responsibility for the daily management of the school, including pedagogical leadership, executive decision-making and budgeting. The ways schools organize and structure their administration vary from school to school, and from culture to culture. Here, the head of the school and the deputy head, or the primary school principal and the assistant principal, are considered as administrators in a PYP school. When practitioners of the programme are referred to, it means teachers, coordinators and administrators.

Each teacher’s and administrator’s personal construct of the PYP changes over time as a result of his or her practice and reflection. Therefore, time, in terms of number of years of experience, is a contributing factor to the level of expertise that you would expect a PYP practitioner to demonstrate. However, a more significant contributing factor to a deeper understanding, and improved practice, of the PYP is the nature of the collaboration in which any individual has participated. It is expected that for all practitioners some of the relevant collaboration will take place outside of the school, at workshops or conferences. However, for almost all PYP practitioners, the most substantial collaboration takes place within the school community—a requirement in accordance with standard C2, “The school has implemented a system through which all teachers plan and reflect in collaborative teams” (IB *Programme standards and practices*, 2005). A marked awareness of the value of professional collaboration is part of the ethos of a PYP school, and evidence of this belief will be seen in practices within the school.

The IB learner profile is a reference point for the learning of all within an IB World School, students and adults, and, as such, is a device to support collaboration, communication and reflective practice within the pedagogical leadership team.

IB learner profile	
<p>The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.</p> <p>IB learners strive to be:</p>	
Inquirers	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
Knowledgeable	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
Balanced	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Figure 1

Models of shared pedagogical leadership

Each school must decide which model of shared pedagogical leadership works best for them. It may be straightforward and include only the principal of the primary section of the school and the PYP coordinator (see figure 2); or it may be a matrix model including the head of the school, the principal of the primary section, the PYP coordinator, and all the teachers to various degrees (see figure 3). Grade/year level and/or subject area coordinators, if they exist, would also be included in the leadership team.

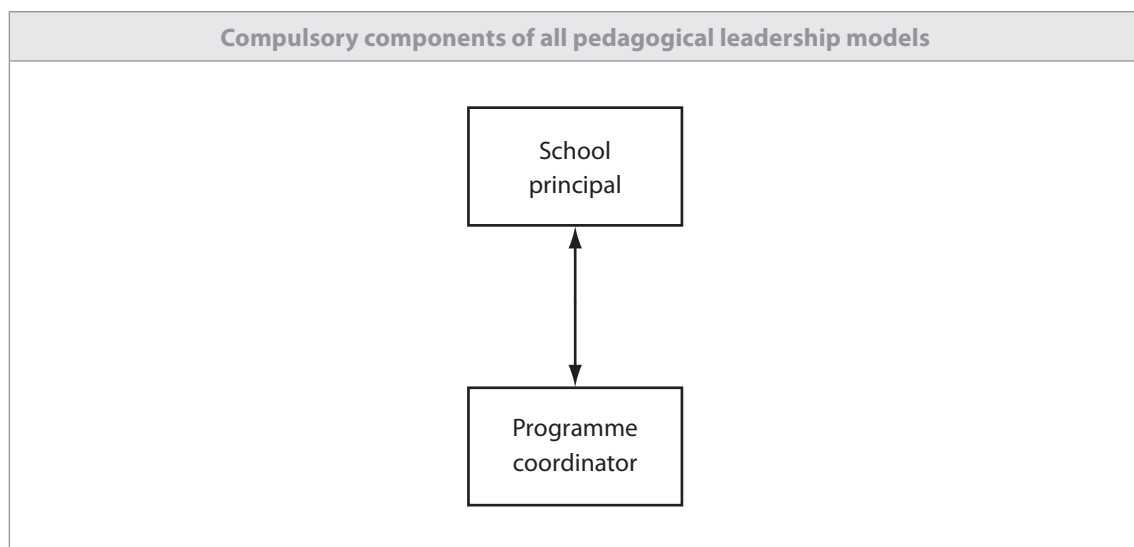


Figure 2

Although the distribution of pedagogical leadership responsibilities should be shared equitably among the members of the pedagogical leadership team, it is understood that lines of accountability and management are likely to exist within the team. To accommodate these divergent working relationships, and to make them effective, communication within the group needs to be fully functioning—frequent, open, respectful, and focused on teaching and learning. It is a requirement of the programme that time is allocated for teachers to plan collaboratively. The need for the pedagogical leadership team to do so is just as compelling.

The school will be effectively supporting the ongoing development and flourishing of the PYP in the community by:

- identifying the positions that constitute the pedagogical leadership team
- defining the responsibilities of each member of the team
- empowering the individuals who hold those positions.

The model of shared pedagogical leadership that a school decides upon needs to be communicated throughout the school community. This will help the leadership team to establish objectives, delineate individual responsibilities, and articulate the responsibilities within the team. This transparency will alleviate misunderstandings, clarify channels of communication, prevent redundancy of effort, and save time. More importantly, it will project and promote a common understanding of the standards and practices of the PYP, and of their impact on the culture of the school. Thus, the pedagogical leadership team is pivotal in shaping and strengthening the school community, particularly important in a time of significant change.

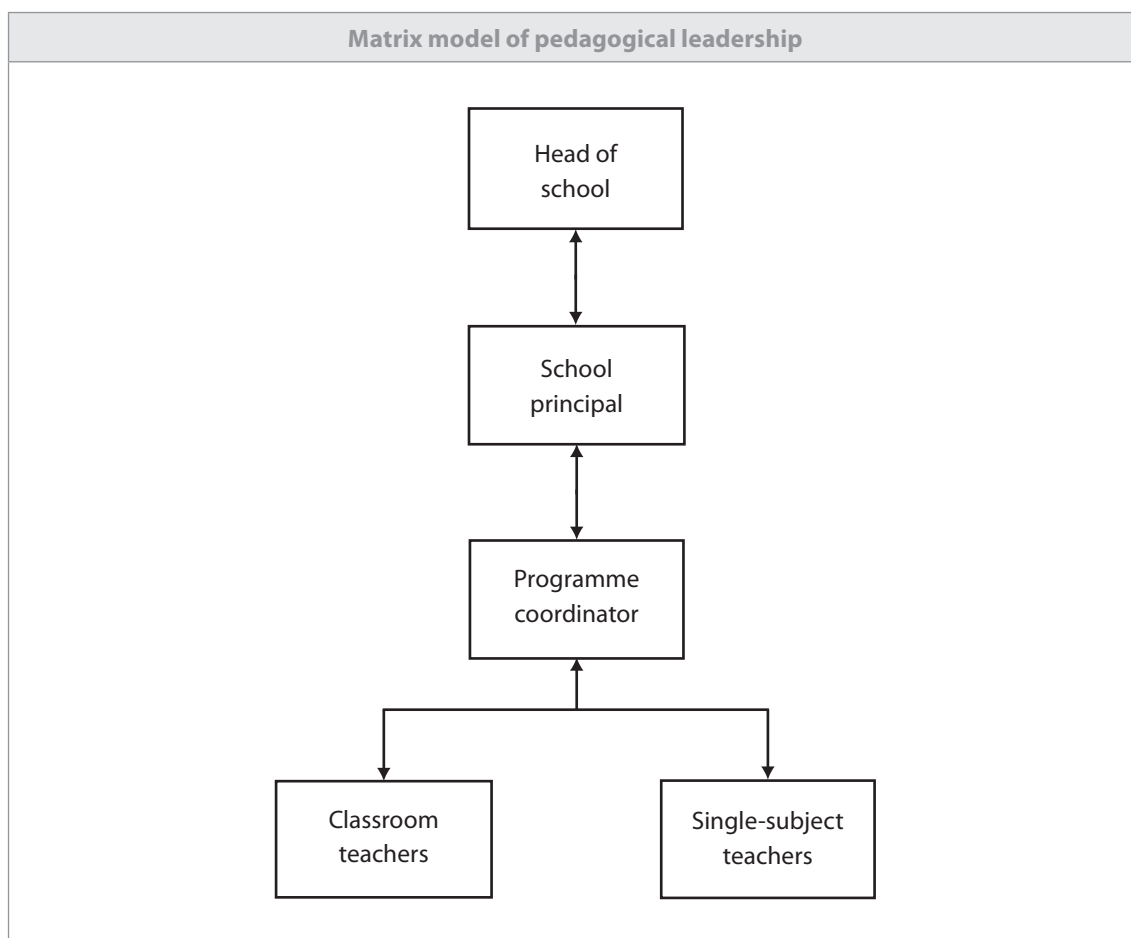


Figure 3

The relationship between the school principal and the PYP coordinator

Whatever the model adopted in any one school, the principal of the primary section and the PYP coordinator will always be the common denominators across schools. This document focuses on the roles and responsibilities of these two positions within the pedagogical leadership team. It is the hope that PYP schools will endeavour to create an effective working balance of responsibilities between these two positions so that it is recognized by all in the school community that pedagogical leadership is a central responsibility of both positions. The job descriptions of both positions should state this responsibility clearly and emphatically.

The IB does not recommend the ratio of teaching time versus coordination time that a school should put in place for the PYP coordinator. However, the pivotal role of the PYP coordinator, as pedagogical leader, requires that the school recognizes the scope of this responsibility. A workable arrangement should be made to support, as fully as possible, the effectiveness of the coordination of the programme.

The PYP coordinator

All PYP schools must appoint a coordinator. Normally, the coordinator is recruited from the teaching staff. This person should have proven teaching ability and be able to act as a pedagogical leader of the programme in the school.

A commitment to collaborative planning is central to the philosophy of the PYP. The PYP coordinator has a pivotal role in this process and has to ensure that the standards for implementation are understood, and that the programme is planned, taught and assessed collaboratively.

Together with other members of the school's pedagogical leadership team, the PYP coordinator is responsible for the development of the programme and the whole-school implementation of the programme. Besides communicating with the school administrator(s), the PYP coordinator should work collaboratively with all members of the teaching team and be involved in whole-school planning, as well as in-school and out-of-school professional development. In addition, the PYP coordinator is responsible for the communication with the relevant IB office.

The duties performed by the PYP coordinator will vary according to the number of students, the management structure and the type of school. The amount of time allocated to fulfill the responsibilities of the PYP coordinator varies from school to school. However, sufficient time outside specific teaching responsibilities should be allocated to allow the PYP coordinator to meet the requirements outlined in his or her job description in a timely and effective manner.

Responsibilities of the pedagogical leadership team

Creating an internationally minded community of learners

The PYP is dedicated to promoting the learning of each student in its community, and students with particular needs are supported to maximize their learning. The programme provides all students with opportunities to see themselves as members of a local, a national and a global community. In many PYP schools, there are students with a mother tongue different from the language of instruction in the school, and with cultural backgrounds different from the host country in which the school is situated. In the PYP it is recognized that all students should have opportunities to develop their mother tongue and an understanding of their culture in order to support their learning. Through learning other languages, students deepen their understanding of other cultures and are able to learn and communicate in the global community in which they live.

The staff and the parents of a PYP school are also considered to be learners. Becoming a PYP school and maintaining the climate of inquiry throughout the school community is considered to be an ongoing journey where all the members of the community are encouraged to become better lifelong learners. Given that the hallmarks of international-mindedness are embedded in the IB learner profile, its relevance across the school community should be a discussion point within that community.

In addition to links to the local community, an IB World School also becomes a member of a global community of learners and has access to the resources and the expertise that lie within that community.

To create and strengthen the community of learners, the PYP school should:

- identify the roles and responsibilities of each member of the pedagogical leadership team
- communicate the roles and the responsibilities of the pedagogical leadership team to the school community, as appropriate
- empower the roles within the pedagogical leadership team
- develop job descriptions for the PYP coordinator and for all teachers linked to programme implementation standards and practices
- assess the performance of the PYP coordinator and of the teachers against their job descriptions
- identify and train teachers to take on responsibilities for pedagogical leadership
- develop, in collaboration with specific interest groups, a clear, long-term strategic plan, with actions and a timeline for its implementation
- develop and implement the school language policy
- develop and implement the school assessment policy.

To strengthen the understanding of the PYP in the community, the school should:

- regularly set aside structured in-service days to develop the programme collaboratively
- organize the schedule to allow for a variety of ongoing collaborative planning opportunities, involving the PYP coordinator, the classroom teachers, all single-subject teachers, and the principal, as appropriate
- ensure that all teachers and administrators have access to all PYP publications
- ensure that all teachers, the PYP coordinator and the principal are trained to implement the PYP
- ensure that every new teacher and new principal is informed about and trained to implement the PYP through an induction process
- regularly arrange general sessions about the PYP for the whole school community and for interest groups within the community, for example, parents
- demonstrate reflective leadership practice that values feedback
- model the constructivist approach, including inquiry, during meetings or workshops focusing on gaining a better understanding of the requirements of the programme
- model and promote the IB learner profile and the PYP attitudes
- encourage teachers to see themselves as researchers and support their inquiries into pedagogy.

Students

The PYP emphasizes the importance of students making connections between their experience and the incremental pieces of new information they encounter. The programme supports the students' struggles to gain understanding of the world and to learn to function comfortably within it, to move from not knowing to knowing, to identifying what is real and what is not real, to acknowledging what is appropriate and what is not appropriate. To do this, the students must integrate a great deal of information and apply this accumulation of knowledge in a cohesive and effective way.

The subject-specific bodies of knowledge, together with the transdisciplinary themes, provide a comprehensive, well-balanced curriculum that requires students to reflect on their roles and responsibilities and to participate fully in the learning process. The concept-driven nature of the PYP—both transdisciplinary and subject based—helps the teacher to make the classroom a stimulating and provocative place, where the student's point of view, supported by knowledge, skill, reflection and understanding, is both valued and made useful.

Inquiry, as the leading but not exclusive pedagogical approach of the PYP, is recognized as being intimately connected with the development of students' comprehension of the world.

The PYP recognizes many different forms of inquiry based on students' genuine curiosity and on their wanting and needing to know more about the world. Inquiry, as a pedagogy, is most successful when students' questions are honest and have real significance in moving them in a substantial way to new levels of knowledge and understanding. The PYP states that the most penetrating questions, ones most likely to inform the students' understanding, come from existing knowledge. The structure of the learning environment, including the home, the classroom, the school and the community, and the behaviour modelled by others in that environment, particularly the parent and the teacher, will lay down the knowledge base that will nurture meaningful participation and inquiry on the part of the students.

Inquiry is encouraged particularly when students are investigating and developing an understanding of the central idea in a unit of inquiry, but also when students are learning about any subject outside of the programme of inquiry.

An explicit expectation of the PYP is that successful inquiry will lead to responsible action, initiated by the students as a result of the learning process. This action may extend the students' learning, or it may have a wider social impact. Both inquiry and action will clearly look different within each age group and from one age range to the next.

To support the students' learning in the PYP, the school should:

- ensure that the curriculum promotes students making connections, thinking conceptually and critically, and reflecting on their own learning
- ensure support is available for students with diagnosed special needs
- ensure the balance between transdisciplinary and disciplinary learning
- ensure that the knowledge component of the school curriculum is worth knowing
- encourage the use of inquiry as a pedagogical approach
- ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for student-initiated actions
- ensure that assessment, in the form of feedback, helps students to think about how they learn and to become more proficient and self-directed
- ensure that summative assessment in a unit of inquiry is an effective way of assessing each student's understanding of the central idea
- ensure that students know and understand the assessment criteria.

Teachers

It is essential that **all** teachers responsible for implementing the PYP (classroom, single-subject, language of instruction support, and resource, for example, librarian, media specialist) think of themselves as PYP teachers, and are aware of the requirements of the PYP regarding planning, teaching and assessing. It is important that the teachers become committed to the PYP and understand the significant professional development opportunity that engagement with the programme provides for them.

The PYP curriculum consists of planned, taught and assessed components, and the leadership team should be supporting reflective practice in order to shift the focus from teaching to learning.

In the PYP collaborative planning enhances the climate of inquiry, provides a more coherent curriculum, and assures the rigour of the students' learning experiences. Collaborative planning requires creative thinking in scheduling timetables, and possibly a change in work habits in the school.

The variety of challenges for teachers when implementing the programme is recognized. The leadership team ensures that every teacher has ownership of, and is encouraged to contribute to, the development of the programme and the enrichment of the learning culture of the school.

It would be worthwhile for the teachers and the pedagogical leadership team to develop a PYP teacher's job description collaboratively. This job description should:

- focus on responsibilities relating to student learning (as other duties are likely to be described in a staff working agreement/staff handbook/staff contract)
- directly reflect the philosophy, values and practices described in this document and in *Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education* (2009)
- support the teacher in addressing the current version of the programme standards and practices
- form the basis for a mechanism for performance appraisal and professional development.

Parents

Experience in a number of schools has shown that, given the right approach that allows parents to construct meaning based on their previous experience, parents are often relieved to hear about the PYP and are very supportive of it. The school may well be a significant contributor to the well-being of the family and can provide a much appreciated community, particularly for families on the move. The school is accountable to parents and their children for the education it chooses to provide.

The school should let parents know that:

- the PYP promotes learning for all students in the school regardless of their cultural background, mother tongue or special educational need, as laid out in the school's admissions policy
- although some of the content included will be unique to any one school, the PYP determines the framework for all schools, and the IB requires that the same standards and practices apply to all schools
- the PYP framework requires the development of particular concepts, knowledge, skills and attitudes, and that opportunities for students to take action are considered and planned for
- the PYP is part of the continuum of international education offered by the IB—the approach to teaching and learning in the PYP is an excellent preparation for, but not a prerequisite for, the IB Middle Years Programme or the IB Diploma Programme
- the PYP curriculum has been developed by highly experienced teachers and school leaders from a variety of school contexts; they contribute a global perspective supported by compelling educational theory and research
- the teachers plan the programme together, providing a coherent education, with expectations of the students that are similar from one teacher to another
- the PYP promotes good teaching practice through the written curriculum documents, the sharing of ideas among IB World Schools and ongoing professional development
- a documented language policy is available to them
- a documented assessment policy is available to them
- a documented special needs policy is available to them, if appropriate
- teachers' collaborative planning ensures a rigorous programme that includes assessment tasks that are specific to what is being taught and allows student learning to be continually supported.

School board

The board has sufficient knowledge about and is committed to the common standards of the IB and the programme-specific standards of the PYP, and understands the process of becoming an IB World School. The board has an essential role as an ongoing support group before and after authorization to ensure the successful implementation of the PYP.

The head of school, or primary school principal, should let the board know that the PYP curriculum:

- promotes learning for each individual in the school regardless of their cultural background, mother tongue or special educational needs, as determined in the school's admissions policy
- develops the conceptual understanding, knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for tomorrow's workplace
- aims to produce students who will make a difference in a complex, challenging future
- alongside the students' academic development, provides students with opportunities to develop their ethical perspectives, and to take action as a result of their learning

- works towards the achievement of student learning outcomes identified in the IB learner profile and in the subject-specific scope and sequence documents
- has been developed by highly experienced teachers and school leaders from a variety of school contexts; they contribute a global perspective supported by compelling educational theory and research; no single national curriculum is imposed
- connects the school community to a global network of IB World Schools and provides access to extensive expertise and professional development
- facilitates transfer between schools
- provides opportunities to include parents in the learning process.

Supporting change across the community

The degree of change required to implement the PYP on a school-wide level will vary considerably from one school to another. Schools should expect that:

- school-wide adoption of the PYP will require change not only in the classroom but throughout the school community
- engaging in this change process will have a beneficial impact on the whole school and, most significantly, on the quality of student learning
- the process of change in teaching practice will require substantial, sustained support from the administrators of the school for all teachers, including professional development for all staff.

The role of the school's pedagogical leadership team is crucial to the school-wide commitment to change. Therefore, it is important that every administrator understands and supports the basic principles that represent the essence of the PYP. Every administrator needs to be aware of the kinds of practical support needed for successful implementation within each classroom and on the part of all teachers.

Improving teaching and learning

Many of the conversations within an effective school community are focused on individual reflections on teaching and learning, what Caldwell and Spinks (1998) refer to as an “unrelenting focus on learning outcomes”. Conversations between a teacher and a student are primarily about the student's learning and the impact of the student on the learning of others. Conversations among teachers, and between teachers and the PYP coordinator, are concerned with the implementation of the PYP curriculum model (see figure 4). Conversations between the PYP coordinator and the principal are concerned with the pervasive influence of the PYP on all aspects of the functioning of a cohesive school community with a singularity of purpose.

The pedagogical leadership team will have an overarching responsibility for ensuring that the teaching and learning will be enriched in line with the philosophical and implementation requirements of the programme, in accordance with the *Programme standards and practices* (2005).

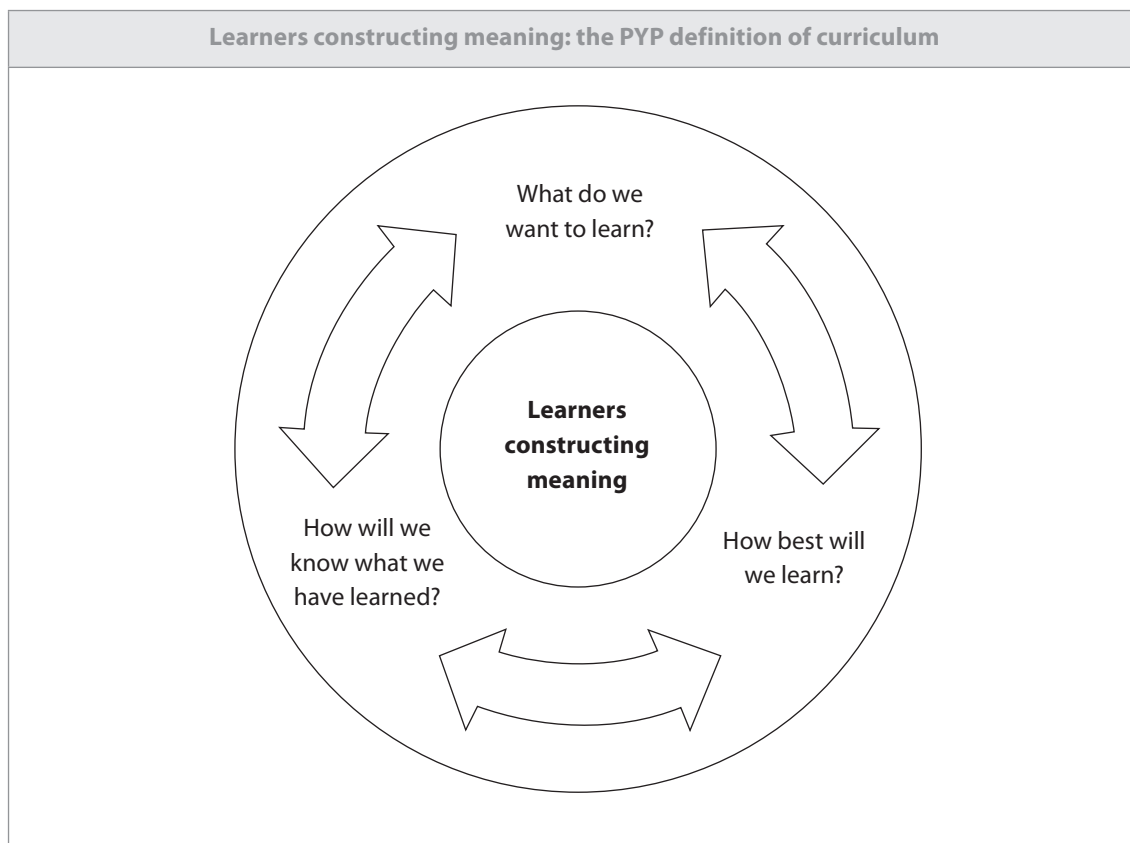


Figure 4

Supporting ongoing professional development

The pedagogical leadership team has a responsibility to encourage the learning of everyone in a PYP school community. This is clearly reinforced by the IB defining a learner profile applicable to all, not just a student profile. Alignment with the IB mission statement also requires the school to demonstrate that it values the concept of lifelong learning. There is no better commitment the school can make in this regard than to put in place an effective ongoing professional development policy. This support requires that appropriate resources, both time and money, are available to sustain the policy in the long term.

This resourcing is a substantial expense in any context. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that development resources will be linked, to some degree, to individual teacher performance appraisal. The school principal usually holds the responsibility for teacher appraisal entirely. Sharing that responsibility with the PYP coordinator is an option that should be considered with extreme caution, as it is likely to change the working dynamic between the coordinator and the teachers.

Ongoing professional development for the entire faculty, and for smaller collaborative groups, should be taking place continually within the school community. The pedagogical leadership team will need to take responsibility for this directly; or indirectly by bringing in an expert or coach to address a defined area for which there is a demonstrated need for development.

This ongoing professional development is often supplemented by workshops and conferences organized by an outside agency. Clearly, for IB World Schools, the IB has a large contribution to make in this area. In fact, it is a requirement that all PYP teachers and administrators receive some training provided by the IB. Professional development opportunities provided by the IB may well be supplemented by other relevant outsourcing. Professional development records need to be kept from year to year as the IB will request to

see these as part of the evaluation process. Any teacher new to the school, who has not received training provided by the IB when in another school setting, must be given the opportunity to receive such training. Occasionally, at the point of evaluation of the implementation of the programme this requirement will have been overlooked. Therefore, the PYP coordinator needs to be diligent about ensuring that everyone delivering the PYP has been trained to do so, as requested in practice B1.11: “The school provides staff who are appropriately qualified and trained to teach the programme” (IB *Programme standards and practices*, 2005).

Practitioners new to the school

In order to maintain the ongoing development and implementation of the PYP, and to ensure the understanding of the PYP by new teachers and administrators, every PYP school needs to have an induction programme.

An induction programme in a PYP school should include:

- an introduction to the standards and practices of the PYP
- an introduction to the pervasive nature of the PYP
- an introduction to the collaborative planning practices and reflective teaching practices of the school
- an introduction to the *Making the PYP happen* documents and the school’s programme of inquiry
- attendance at PYP workshops.

Support from the IB

The IB organizes professional development opportunities for pedagogical leaders, including programme coordinators, and for teachers in the practices and underlying philosophy of the PYP. These opportunities address different needs and support new, as well as experienced, schools in the programme. A schedule for these events can be viewed on the IB website, <http://www.ibo.org>.

Performance appraisal

Performance appraisal should reflect the mission of the school and the beliefs and values embedded in the PYP. It should depend upon evidence of each person’s understanding and implementation of the PYP standards and practices. The method of conducting professional performance appraisal varies from one school to another but, invariably, it should be part of the process of assessing the relevance and effectiveness of the PYP programme. Performance appraisal should support the reflective practice throughout the school and promote the concept of lifelong learning for all.

Both the person responsible for the appraisal, normally the principal, and the teachers or the PYP coordinator should look for evidence of appropriate practice based on the relevant job description. Opportunities for professional development are investigated and decided upon in collaboration.

An overview of the components described above is shown in figure 5.

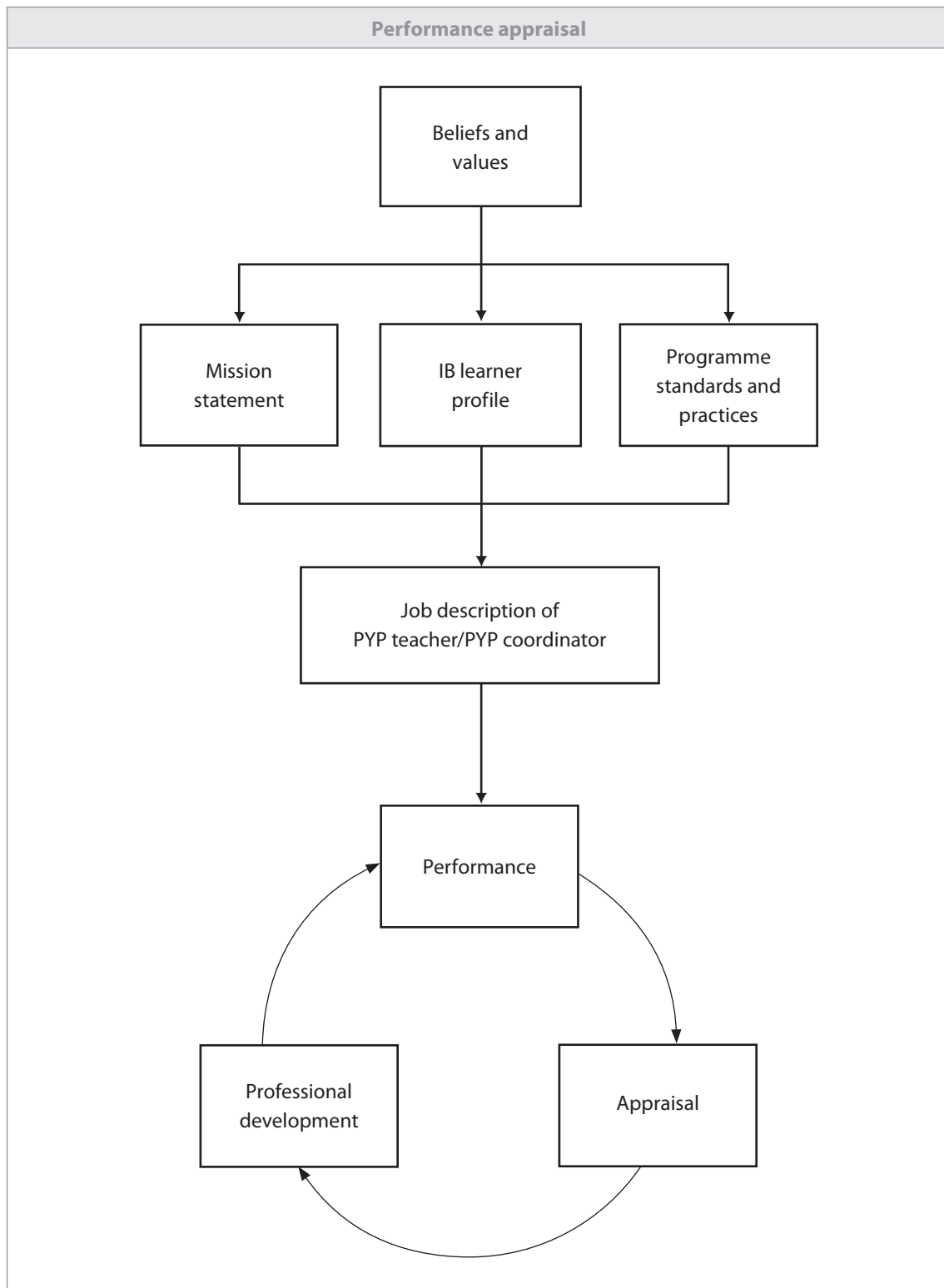


Figure 5

What evidence will indicate that the PYP is happening?

Research evidence (James, Connolly, Dunning and Elliot 2006) indicates that the most consistent indicators of an effective primary school are:

- when the “primary task”, that the teaching and learning is focused on addressing, has been identified and understood by all
- when the practitioners, that is, teachers and administrators, believe they are, in practice, addressing the primary task
- when the evidence indicates that the primary task is defining practices school wide.

The school is responsible for establishing procedures to assess the effectiveness of the programme and to ensure that the PYP is implemented school wide. Evidence needs to indicate that:

- the school’s philosophy clearly expresses a set of beliefs and values about student learning
- the IB learner profile and the essential elements of the PYP are all taken into consideration in an explicit manner in planning, teaching and learning
- the teacher’s job description is a direct reflection of the standards and practices of the programme
- planning takes place collaboratively
- all teachers use the PYP planner, as appropriate, and there is an archive of stored planners
- there is a documented and implemented assessment policy that reflects the PYP assessment guidelines
- there is a documented and implemented language policy that reflects the PYP language policy guidelines
- inquiry in action is evident in classrooms at all grade/year levels
- teachers have organized their resources around units of inquiry
- there is a well-established library or media centre that provides resources, representing wide cultural and linguistic perspectives, for teachers and students to teach and learn through units of inquiry
- the purchasing of resources is driven by the inquiry-based curriculum, promoting conceptual development, critical thinking and problem solving.

What evidence will indicate that the students are learning effectively?

The PYP approach to learning demands that a range of assessment, recording and reporting strategies be used. These strategies will provide the school’s leadership team, teachers, students and parents with accurate and accessible data on each student’s learning. The school needs to acknowledge the purposes of assessment in the PYP, and provide leadership in the development and implementation of an assessment policy by:

- creating opportunities for teachers to plan and reflect collaboratively
- focusing some of the school-wide professional development on learning as much as possible about the purposes, principles and practices of effective assessment
- developing a comprehensive assessment policy that incorporates purpose, principles and practice
- reinforcing the links between what students know and can do
- reinforcing the links between assessment, recording and reporting
- reviewing the school’s system of reporting to ensure that it reflects the school’s assessment policy and the PYP assessment guidelines
- ensuring that teachers understand their responsibility in the assessment process, including this responsibility in the job description and addressing it in the appraisal process.

How are pedagogical leadership practices changing?

Increased emphasis on:	Decreased emphasis on:
developing an effective recruitment process to address the needs of the programme	recruitment of principals and teachers with little or no experience of or commitment to the programme
a model of shared leadership that requires collaboration within the leadership team	leadership that is not focused on the programme, where the responsibilities are unclear and unilateral decisions are made
recognizing the need for scheduled opportunities for effective collaboration school wide	acceptance of long-standing time constraints and on lack of commitment to resource collaboration
strengthening communication between and among all the stakeholders so that everyone is better informed about the programme	infrequent communication concerning teaching and learning among and between the stakeholders
effective use of frequent feedback	feedback not being sought
empowering teachers to make decisions regarding the development and implementation of the programme	a centralized decision-making process where the experience and perspective of the teachers is not fully considered
providing a climate that empowers students and teachers to become autonomous learners	students not understanding their proactive role in the learning process
supporting long-term continual reflection and change in the school community	underestimating the long-term effort and commitment required to support ongoing change and development
addressing any inconsistency between the understanding of the “primary task” and the implementation of the “primary task” school wide	allowing each teacher to follow a divergent path so that the “primary task” is not addressed school wide
defining specific, achievable, time-framed goals for each teacher and each member of the leadership team related to the implementation of the programme	not setting individual goals that are specific, achievable and time framed; or not following up once the goals have been set
providing differentiated development for teachers and all members of the leadership team to support and enrich the programme	not assessing the development needs of each teacher and member of the leadership team; having a rota system for development needs
broadening opportunities for ongoing professional development	depending on one professional development resource
leadership that promotes an understanding that learning in authentic, real-life situations is transdisciplinary	undervaluing the philosophy behind the implementation requirements of the programme; using the programme principally as a marketing device

Figure 6

Increased emphasis on:	Decreased emphasis on:
providing the students with cohesive and coherent learning experiences	the oversight of not seeing the educational experience from the perspective of the student
understanding that assessment of student work and performance to improve learning needs to be embedded in, and a direct extension of, the programme.	assessment protocols that are unrelated to the programme or to the experience of the students in the school.

Figure 6 (continued)

How do we find the time?

As any administrator or teacher will confirm, there is never enough time. Set out below are some practical suggestions for finding, making or buying that precious commodity, time.

- Release some teachers during assemblies.
- Teach a class yourself to enable a teacher to work with a colleague.
- Encourage team-teaching, which may allow one teacher to take a larger group, so releasing a colleague.
- Schedule early release or late start days so that teams can plan together; build these into the calendar or weekly schedule.
- Use student teachers, teaching assistants and parents, teamed with a qualified teacher, to work with combined classes.
- Make sure that the schedule allows for common planning time between members of a grade/year level team. For example, increase the length of four days, and release students early on the fifth, or start the day later for students, and earlier for teachers.
- During the orientation days at the beginning of a school year, keep administrative details to a minimum and use the time for planning together.
- View each staff meeting as a professional development opportunity; handle administrative issues in other ways—memos, daily bulletins, a read-and-pass-on file.
- Reconsider how best to use in-service days; recognize that the one-off consultant is not always effective in bringing about lasting change and that training days may be better used by providing time for teachers to plan together.
- Use more of the budget to release teachers to plan and reflect together. For example, pay substitutes or pay staff for part of their own time.
- Take the whole staff on a weekend retreat away from school and spend the time discussing, planning and reflecting.
- Alternate staff meetings so that some are for professional development, some for collaborative planning, and some for administration.

What it means to be an IB World School

An IB World School works towards meeting the implementation standards established by the IB, and it puts practices in place to bring about institutional change in order to improve teaching and learning and to strengthen the school community and culture. It is committed to reflection, improving practice and to long-term sustained change.

Schools implementing the PYP will be committed to the promotion of an international education as expressed in the mission statement of the IB. They accept the importance of the learner at the centre of the educational process, and of the IB learner profile in defining the outcomes of that process. The attributes listed in the learner profile describe international-mindedness as demonstrated by learners in IB World Schools.

The school's curriculum includes all student activities for which the school takes responsibility, since they all have an impact on student learning. It is expected that teachers will be learners too; that they will continue to reflect upon and improve their practice and their understanding of the content with which they engage.

It is expected that an IB World School will be outward thinking as well as forward thinking, and will be making connections within the family of IB World Schools and making contributions both to the IB and to its local community.

Whole-school approach in the PYP

In addition to meeting the criteria for authorization as defined in the documents on school authorization (see <http://www.ibo.org/pyp/authorization>), a PYP school is to implement the programme in an inclusive manner, so that all students in all the grade/year levels in the school, or in the primary division of a school, are as fully engaged as possible with the PYP. The IB is advocating that the PYP, based on the educational theories upon which it is built, is the best way to educate young students. Consequently, the suggestion that the PYP be implemented as a “magnet” programme or as an “international stream” within a school contradicts that premise.

Consideration phase

During the first phase of the application process, the school examines the PYP philosophy and curriculum to determine how they may be interpreted and applied in the school, and how they could meet the students' needs. A thorough feasibility study should be conducted on the possible consequences of implementing the programme. The IB regional offices provide information and guidance on this process. As part of the feasibility study, and in order to examine the programme in depth, it is essential that schools obtain the relevant PYP publications. The IB store at <http://store.ibo.org> provides a list of publications, along with information on how to order.

Introductory seminars and training workshops, organized by the IB regional offices, also offer important information on the programme and, on the recommendation of the regional office, schools can contact or visit IB World Schools in their region that offer the PYP.

This consideration phase is expected to take at least six months, during which time the head of school and the board should be obtaining support from the principal, the teachers and the parents. Should the school decide to adopt the PYP, it is expected, at this stage, to designate the future PYP coordinator, to plan the implementation of the programme and to initiate training for the PYP coordinator and teachers. All teachers, including the PYP coordinator, must undertake IB-approved training, and the primary school principal must also receive introductory training.

Schools will then prepare and collate the materials needed to accompany the application. The school submits the following material to the regional office:

- completed PYP *Application form part A*
- application fee
- the required supporting documentation.

Candidate phase

Once a school has received permission from the regional office to implement the PYP as a candidate school, the school must continue its preparation to deliver the programme. This phase will involve putting in place all the necessary processes and resources to deliver the PYP, including teacher training, curriculum development and providing opportunities for teachers to plan collaboratively for both horizontal and vertical articulation of the curriculum. All candidate schools are required to teach the programme for at least one year on a trial basis, with appropriate guidance from the regional office, before the PYP *Application form part B* is submitted.

Regular contact should be maintained with the appropriate regional office. At this stage, schools are offered access to the online curriculum centre (OCC). This provides teachers and administrators with guidance and offers opportunities for online discussion with PYP colleagues.

A consultation visit is required before the authorization visit takes place, and may occur during this phase or the final phase. The timing of this visit is at the discretion of the appropriate regional office, but in consultation with the school.

Authorization phase

After implementing the programme as a candidate school for at least one year, the school submits the completed PYP *Application form part B*, the application fee, and the required supporting documentation to the regional office. On completion of a favourable review of the submitted application, the regional office arranges an authorization visit by an IB visiting team.

The authorization visit is intended to ensure that the candidate school is genuinely committed to the pursuit of excellence in international education and, in particular, to the philosophy of the PYP. The IB visiting team also ascertains the school's preparedness to offer the programme and verifies that the school's planning has been both systematic and comprehensive.

The purpose of the authorization visit, more generally, is not to appraise or assess individual teachers or administrators. Rather, it is to ensure that the educational principles and practices on which the PYP is founded will be maintained and furthered by candidate schools.

The candidate school benefits from the advice of the IB visiting team and receives feedback on its plans for implementation, while the visiting team gathers information about the school's commitment to, and ability to offer, the PYP. The documents on school authorization (see <http://www.ibo.org/pyp/authorization>) describe this process in more detail.

Programme evaluation

Programme evaluation is mandatory for all IB World Schools. It is a means of ensuring the ongoing quality of the programme in IB World Schools, while assisting schools in their own self-evaluation and curriculum development procedures. Programme evaluation occurs at regular, predetermined intervals, normally three years after the date of full authorization to teach the programme, then every five years thereafter.

The documents *Guide to programme evaluation* and *Programme evaluation self-study questionnaire* are available to PYP coordinators in electronic format on the OCC and also from the IB regional offices, and as read-only files on IBIS (International Baccalaureate information system) from the time of authorization. These documents aim to help the school conduct its own self-study and prepare for the evaluation visit. They should be used well ahead of the time of the evaluation visit as tools for discussion and opportunities to prepare the school curriculum documentation.

As part of the preparation for the programme evaluation visit, schools are asked to submit supporting documentation according to the guidelines given in the *Guide to programme evaluation*. The appropriate regional office organizes the evaluation process. Schools will be notified of an upcoming evaluation visit well ahead of time, normally a year in advance. Well before the visit takes place, the school will be requested by the regional office to read the *Guide to programme evaluation* and to complete and submit the *Programme evaluation self-study questionnaire* to assist in its self-assessment of the programme. The responses to the questionnaire will be used to inform the evaluation visit and will also be incorporated into the evaluation report if this is considered appropriate.

After the school has responded to the first evaluation visit report, it faces new challenges. These challenges include maintaining the reflective practices, and promoting the ongoing development and the implementation of the PYP in the school community. Changes in the staff, students and parent bodies automatically refresh the thinking and practices in a school. Only through a continual internal evaluation process, does the administration effectively manage the school's development of PYP within the school.

The administration ensures that questions such as "What are the big ideas?" and "What are we doing to address the big ideas?" are continually reflected upon.

A school can continue to extend its level of expertise by sharing its experiences with others within the IB global community by promoting the use of the OCC and participating in PYP workshops and IB conferences. In addition, schools can identify and recommend teachers or administrators for curriculum review meetings that take place at IB Cardiff, and provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to be trained as workshop leaders if requested to do so by the IB.

Does the role of the pedagogical leadership team change over time?

During the preliminary stages of becoming an IB World School, much of the energy of the pedagogical leadership team will be spent on bringing about institutional change that impacts on all the functions that take place in a learning community. Dread, inertia, fatigue, cynicism, lack of insight, and even unbridled enthusiasm need to be managed. It is a time of uneasiness—full of new expectations and compromises—but it can also feel like a breath of fresh air. The effect that a commitment to implement the PYP has on a school culture is substantial in all cases, and breathtaking in some.

The reward for everybody's hard work is the school becoming authorized to offer the PYP. Guidance from IB staff and those acting on behalf of the IB will have been available throughout the consideration and candidate phases. As a result of becoming authorized, schools will have some strategic planning and goal setting to do. Authorization is a jumping-off point. In all cases, much work will remain to be done to embed and consolidate the programme so that it is recognized as defining all aspects of school life. Essentially, preparation for programme evaluation begins immediately.

Authorization is recognition of readiness for the ongoing work of endeavouring to meet all of the programme standards. The relevance of the programme standards is school wide. The transdisciplinary programme of inquiry is one of the components of the PYP framework that teachers will not have encountered in another school setting. It requires considerable collaboration and is often what teachers' energies are focused on. Teachers need to understand that the development of a transdisciplinary programme of inquiry is a required practice in order to address the programme standards in the PYP. However, it also needs to be understood that all teaching and learning in a PYP school is directed towards meeting those standards. Hopefully, teachers can be moved away from thinking of the PYP as something that occurs in isolation on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

Another enduring fracture point, in terms of successful implementation of the programme school wide, is the lack of willingness and the inability of some single-subject teachers to see themselves as PYP teachers first. Single-subject teachers can appear to be functioning at the margins of the programme. This is a community issue to be resolved by all, and is certainly not solely the responsibility of the single-subject teacher. The situation is much exacerbated in schools where the single-subject teachers also teach in the middle and/or high school.

Teachers and administrators will be coming and going during the interval between authorization and the first evaluation. It is essential that all new practitioners, with no previous experience in a PYP school, be trained by the IB to deliver the programme.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that teachers are supported in their efforts by witnessing the benefit of the programme on student learning. It would not be overstating the case to say that there is compelling evidence worldwide of students relishing the challenging opportunities that the programme provides for them. So the interval between authorization and first evaluation continues to be an exacting time, but it is rewarding for all. Units of inquiry will have been developed and revised, and more relevant resources will have been procured.

It is important for the leadership team to be moving everyone on in his or her understanding of the programme. This includes the students. An opportunity has been missed if the students, particularly the older ones, do not have an awareness and an understanding of the significance of the programme within which they are working, and cannot make connections between what they learn, how they are learning it, and why they are learning it.

There is evidence that it is particularly difficult to sustain the initiative demonstrated in the early days of implementation of the programme beyond the first programme evaluation. The heady days of innovation are in the past, and the innovators themselves have often moved on. The pedagogical leadership team has its work cut out at this point, and into the future, to maintain the high-energy level required of the entire staff to support a demanding programme. The challenges of the programme may change, but will remain undiminished over time. The commitment to the programme of each new staff member has to be established quickly, with support from both within and outside the school community. The teachers who have given their all from the beginning have to be encouraged to be mentors to the new teachers so that ownership of the programme is continually in the process of being dispersed throughout the collaborative teams.

The pedagogical leadership team needs to see that it has a responsibility beyond maintaining the condition of the programme in the school. The responsibility in the long term is to bring about a deep-seated, pervasive understanding of the programme so that it is implemented more confidently by the community, and recognized by all to be flourishing. The mission of the school and the vision for the development of the programme need to be addressed at regular intervals within the school, not merely linked to the programme evaluation requirement of the IB. Once again, the clarification of the “primary task” to review continually teaching and learning in the context of the PYP is of paramount importance.

We do well to consider that every new student who comes into our schools is experiencing the PYP from a fresh perspective and they deserve every opportunity to thrive within our IB World Schools.

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